

someone they loved go away to war. I'm talking about the newlywed wife whose husband departed just months after their marriage. I'm talking about the young toddler who barely knew their father before they deployed. I'm talking about the mom and dad who shed tears as their young child left to join the fight. I'm talking about each and every family member who had someone they loved fight in Vietnam. They sacrificed so much and deserve to be commended as well.

Mr. Speaker, today we salute those who served our nation in Vietnam, and, on behalf of a grateful nation, we thank them for their patriotism and service. May we never forget their sacrifice, may God bless our veterans, and may God always bless the United States of America.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 21, 2016

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to be at votes on the evening of March 14, 2016 because my flight from Portland, Oregon, was delayed. If I had been present, I would have voted for passage of S. 2426, H. Con. Res. 75, and H. Con. Res. 121, all of which passed the House under suspension of the rules.

S. 2426, a bill to direct the Secretary of State to develop a strategy to obtain observer status for Taiwan in the International Criminal Police Organization, would move Taiwan closer to having access to the International Criminal Police Organization's (INTERPOL) global police communication system. In November 2015, I voted for a similar bill, H.R. 1853, and I support policies that further Taiwan's participation in international relations.

H. Con. Res. 75, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress that atrocities committed by ISIL against religious and ethnic minorities are "war crimes," "crimes against humanity," "genocide" passed the House unanimously. I support the resolution, and I would have voted for it if I had been present.

H. Con. Res. 121, a resolution expressing the sense of Congress condemning the gross violations of international law amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Government of Syria, its allies, and other parties to the conflict in Syria, passed the House by a vote of 392–3, and I would have voted for the bill if I had been present. The atrocities committed against the citizens of Syria are appalling and inhumane, and I strongly condemn them.

HONORING THE LEADERSHIP OF NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE

HON. CRESENT HARDY

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 21, 2016

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the service of five of the most outstanding leaders in our United States Air Force.

These five men, Major General Jay Silveria, Brigadier General Christopher Short, Colonel

Richard Boutwell, Colonel Thomas Dempsey, and Colonel Aaron Steffens, have all served with honor and distinction at Nellis Air Force Base back in my district in southern Nevada.

For those who do not know, Nellis Air Force Base is the most important asset in our Air Force. So important, in fact, that there is the oft repeated slogan that, "As goes Nellis, so goes the United States Air Force."

And this isn't just some clever saying. Nellis is home to the Air Force's most advanced and realistic schools and training exercises. It is truly the epicenter of the three T's: testing, tactics, and training.

With the vast array of resources and missions carried out at the base, our Airmen are able to take the fight to our enemies with the full force and power of the world's greatest Air Force.

As a freshman Member of Congress, I could not have asked for a better cadre of officers to lead the many young servicemembers who call my district home. Their principled leadership and dogged determination to achieve excellence in every facet of their mission is truly an inspiration to everyone in our community.

It has been a privilege to develop strong working relationships with each of these commanders, and to seek their informed counsel on some of the most pressing issues affecting the readiness and capabilities of our Air Force as well as our national security priorities.

While I am sad to see them go, I know that they will bring the same integrity and leadership to their new commands.

To Tonto, Junior, Chase, Vader, and Fangs, the nation is grateful for your service, and I wish you all the best.

Aim High.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 21, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus in this critical fight to ensure full voting rights for all Americans.

I'd like to thank my colleagues, Congresswoman JOYCE BEATTY, and Congressman HAKEEM JEFFRIES for organizing this special order and for their dedicated leadership in protecting the right of all Americans to vote.

I'd also like to thank Chairman G. K. BUTTERFIELD for his leadership of our caucus as we work to ensure equality and democracy for all American families.

Mr. Speaker, since 2013, when the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act in their *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, too many Americans have seen their voting rights weakened and undermined.

This year, as we celebrated the 51st anniversary of the historic civil rights march from Selma to Montgomery, the very progress we celebrated was under attack.

This year, 16 states have enacted new voting restrictions for the first time in a presidential election since the Voting Rights Act was made law more than 50 years ago. These new barriers range from unnecessary voter ID laws, to ending same-day voter registration, and reducing or completely eliminating early voting.

Since 2010, 21 states have implemented new restrictions. This is a crisis.

While states have put up barriers, Speaker RYAN, Judiciary Chairman GOODLATTE and some Congressional Republicans have ignored the clear, bipartisan consensus to fix the Voting Rights Act and restore voting rights protections for all Americans.

Republican Congressman JAMES SENSENBRENNER has introduced the bipartisan Voting Rights Amendment Act (H.R. 885), which I am proud to co-sponsor with more than 100 other Members of Congress. This is a good first step to restoring voting protections for all Americans.

But let me be clear—simply fixing the Voting Rights Act isn't enough.

We need to empower voters and Congresswoman SEWELL's bill—the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 2867)—would do just that.

It's past time that Congress got serious about protecting voting rights and passing the Voting Rights Advancement Act—and we are here to support these efforts.

Our work is not over until the voice of every American is heard. So I join my colleagues in the CBC tonight to implore our colleagues in the House to work harder to protect the bedrock of our democracy—the right to vote.

DEFINING CERTAIN ATROCITIES AS WAR CRIMES, CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, AND GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. TULSI GABBARD

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 14, 2016

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I co-sponsored and will vote for H. Con. Res. 75 because of my grave concern about the genocide against Christians, Alawites, Shiites, Druze, Yazidis, and other religious minorities in Syria. However, I was extremely disappointed by amendment language later added to this resolution in Committee that provides "cover" or an excuse for ISIS and other terrorist organizations committing this genocide.

Specifically, the language I object to is the following: "Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's violence against the Syrian people has attracted foreign fighters from around the world, who have supported and committed ISIL atrocities."

I fully reject this amendment to the resolution which gives moral legitimacy to the actions of ISIS, al-Qaeda, and others who are committing genocide against Christians, Yazidis, and other religious minorities in Syria.

This amendment is an obvious attempt to make ISIS look like their cause is legitimate. This is unacceptable and undermines the heart of this resolution.

This is very unfortunate because the problem of genocide against Christians, Yazidis, and other religious minorities in Syria is very serious. The main area in Syria where Christians and other religious minorities have any protection from being slaughtered, and where they can practice their own religious faiths without fear of persecution, is in the territory controlled by the Syrian government of Assad.